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AUTHOR	Acevedo, Mary Ann
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ABSTRACT

This final report discusses the activities and outcomes of a project designed to prepare speech-language pathologists (SLPs) to work with culturally and linguistically diverse infant/toddlers, preschoolers, children, and youth, specifically those of Mexican-American heritage. The project supported graduate students earning a master's degree in communication disorders at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, Texas, who were enrolled in the CDIS Program, an American Speech Hearing Language Association accredited program in speech-language pathology. The CDIS Program provided three bilingual courses for a total of 5 additional hours to students supported by this grant. These courses, which increased the students' knowledge of bilingual language development and disorders, were open to all students as well as to professionals in the area. The project resulted in the graduation of 32 students with master's degrees in communication disorders. Twenty-eight of the 32 graduates were Hispanic and 4 were non-Hispanic. Out of the total of 40 Spanish-speaking students provided financial support during the grant's four-year period, 34 will have completed the program and earned their master's degree. Twenty-six of the 32 graduates assumed full-time jobs with public schools or early childhood intervention programs immediately upon graduation. (CR)

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ED 477 214

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

OSEP GRANT H029E970056

DELIVERY OF SPEECH SERVICES TO MINORITIES

1997-2001

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Submitted by
Mary Ann Acevedo, Ph.D.
Project Director
Our Lady of the Lake University

EC 309627

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Final Performance Report - OSEP Grant # H029E970056
Title: Delivery of Speech Services to Minorities
7/1/97 – 12/30/01

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. Description of the Project:

This project supported the preparation of speech-language pathologists (SLPs) to work with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) infant/toddlers, preschoolers, children and youth, specifically those of Mexican-American heritage. The project had the following three goals:

1) to increase the number of SLPs knowledgeable about language acquisition, assessment and intervention with CLD populations, especially for children of Mexican heritage,
2) to increase the number of Spanish-speaking individuals trained as SLPs,
3) to improve the Spanish-language skills of the students selected for this project, especially their use of professional language.

II. Context of the Project:

The students supported by this project were graduate students earning a Master's degree in communication disorders at Our Lady of the Lake University (OLLU). The University is a small, private, Catholic university located in the city of San Antonio, Texas. More than 80% of undergraduates and approximately 50% of graduate students are of Hispanic descent and at least a third of these are heritage speakers of Spanish. Graduate students enrolled in the CDIS Program, which is an ASHA accredited program in speech-language pathology, provide clinical services to communicatively disordered individuals of all ages at

the campus speech and hearing center, The Harry Jersig Center, and at selected off-campus sites. A majority of individuals receiving services both on- and off-campus are of Hispanic descent, with a substantial number speaking Spanish as their first language. The CDIS Program requires all majors to take one course in multicultural service delivery. The students in this project took three additional courses in bilingual language development and disorders and provided a minimum of 25 hours of clinical services in either Spanish or bilingually.

III Accomplishment of Project Goals:

All three of the project's goals were accomplished as follows:

Goal 1: The CDIS Program provided three bilingual courses for a total of 5 additional hours to students supported by this grant. These courses, which increased the students' knowledge of bilingual language development and disorders, were open to all students as well as to professionals in the area. The project sponsored 3 major workshops during the four years. The most recent workshop, "Assessing Language for Academic Success: Frames for Understanding Students from Diverse Backgrounds" was presented by Dr. Carol Westby on September 9, 2000. It was attended by more than 100 individuals including students and practicing SLPs. Over the course of the project Dr. Acevedo presented 1 day workshops on bilingual assessment and intervention at 6 different Education Service Centers in Texas and a mini-seminar at the ASHA Convention held in San Antonio in Fall 1998.

Goal 2: Upon notification that the grant had been approved the CDIS program undertook a heavy recruiting effort to increase the number of Hispanic and Spanish-speaking applicants to the OLLU graduate program. Using letters and flyers we notified the 17 universities in Texas with communication disorders program of the new Hispanic Emphasis Program and the financial support available for students. We also posted information on the ASHA website and the website of the ASHA sponsored Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CAPCSD). We continued to send reminders every year of the grant and also posted information on the program and the project at the annual convention of the Texas Speech-Language-Hearing Association which is held each spring. An average of 16 students per year was supported by the project. Until the final year of the grant (2000-01), when we could not promise full-funding throughout the masters program, we had more applicants for the 8 new cohort positions than we could fill. Over the course of the grant a total of 40 different individuals received financial support from the project.

Goal 3: Improvement of the Spanish language skills of the students was accomplished in two ways: 1) through their practicum experiences with Spanish speakers, and 2) through completion of the selected topics course, "Use of Spanish in Clinical Interactions", a course taught in Spanish.

IV. Problems Encountered in Completing Project:

Basically the project went smoothly encountering very few problems. We had to transition personnel during the second year with the departure of Dr. Paul Hardee who served as the initial Project Specialist and was mentoring students. However, we were able to bring on another Hispanic faculty member, Ms. Pilar Lozano, and she continued to provide the students with academic and clinical support and supervision. However, the research efforts of this grant faltered with Dr. Hardee's departure as the remaining project faculty had full workloads which did not allow enough time for the initiation of appropriate research projects. For any future grants, we would consider it important to have someone assigned to the project that is committed to developing research opportunities for the students as these activities provide students them with opportunities for presentations at local, state and/or national meetings.

Student recruitment was a problem the last year of the grant because students knew the grant would be terminated before they graduated and that their financial support in the second year would be limited to the discounted tuition provided by the university. As a result we were only able to secure six new students, rather than the usual eight, for the fall 2000-2002 cohort and two of those were part-time students who were working full-time in local public schools. In the long run that worked for the students' benefit as encumbered funds remained at the end of the original grant period, June 2001. Upon request DOE granted us an extension period through December 2001 to use the remaining funds. This allowed the last six students to continue to receive

financial support through the end of their degree program (Spring 2002). To enhance recruitment in the final year of any future projects we need to ensure that students are made aware of the university's commitment to the project and the discounted tuition that is offered to any students who have not graduated when the project terminates.

V. Results/Outcomes of the Project:

The major outcome of increasing the number of Spanish-speaking individuals trained as speech-language pathologists was accomplished with the graduation of 32 students with master's degree in communication disorders. Twenty-eight of the 32 graduates are Hispanic and 4 are non-Hispanic. Two additional Hispanic students are still enrolled in the graduate program but expected to complete their degrees within the year. Out of the total of 40 Spanish-speaking students provided financial support during the grant's four year period 34 (85%) will have completed the program and earned their masters degree. Twenty-six of the 32 students who have graduated assumed full-time jobs as with public schools or early childhood intervention programs immediately upon graduation. The two students still remaining in the masters program are both currently employed by public school programs.

VI. Implications for the future

This project was extremely successful in increasing the number of Spanish-speaking individuals who can provide clinical services in both English and Spanish. The university has institutionalized the selected topics courses that were offered as part of the grant and continues to offer them to students who are

still interested in that type of specialization. With its unique setting and the number of minority language speakers living in the San Antonio area, the CDIS program at OLLU has the potential to become a major source of bilingually trained SLPs. Funding resources outside of DOE grant projects need to be generated to ensure the continuation of such training. This type of emphasis within program will require hiring of additional bilingual teaching and supervisory faculty and providing tuition support for interested students. In our most recent graduate cohort we have from two students who applied to the graduate program because of their interest in the Hispanic Emphasis program. We need to continue to foster that interest. The development of research projects in the area of bilingual language development and disorders would also enhance the CDIS Program's reputation regionally and nationally and increase interest in applying to the program. We have attempted to broaden the types of clinical experiences available to Spanish-speaking students and need to continue that effort in order to meet ASHA's new accreditation requirements.

VI. Appendices

Table summarizing project outcomes

Overall Results of Personnel Training Grant H029E970056
July 1997 – June 2001
Our Lady of the Lake University

STUDENTS	97-98	98-99	99-2000	00-01	JY 01-MY 02 EXTENSION FOR FINAL CLASS*	OVERALL TOTALS (UNDUPLICATED COUNT)
FTsupport	13	17	19	12	(4)	
PT support	3	2	0	2	(2)	
Total	16	19	19	14	(6)	
Unduplicated count	16	10	8	6		40
Graduated	5	6	11	8	2	32 = 80%
Work Setting						
Schools	3	5	8	4	2 (+2 con't	24
EIC	1		1	2	students)	4
Other	1	1	2	2		6
Continuing	11	11	8	4	2	2
Did not continue**	0	2	0	2	2	6 (15%)
Hispanic	14	15	18	13	(5)	34
Non-Hisp	2	4	1	1	(1)	6

* Students covered by funding extension were admitted in Fall 2000.

** Of the students who did not continue 2 dropped out due to health reasons, 2 transferred to other programs, and 2 were dismissed from the program due to academic problems.

All students spoke Spanish to some degree with 25 of the 34 who have/will complete the program regarded as fluent Spanish speakers

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